

APPROVED JANUARY 20, 2010

At 7:16 PM Chairman Charles Kimball called the meeting to order. Budget Committee members present were Charles Kimball, Andy Kohlhofer, Mike Nygren, Sue D'Eon, Greta St. Germain and Recording Secretary Jeanne Nygren. School Principal Dawn Lewis, School Board members Sharon Girardi and Ida Keane, and Julie Ryan Fremont resident were also present.

School Principal Dawn Lewis was present to go through the Special Education part of the school budget.

Julie Ryan, a Fremont resident, came in tonight and wanted to discuss the rating of the Ellis School. She came from Sandown and that school system has a higher rating. She was using the school rating for elementary schools in Fremont, Sandown and Kingston. She researched these Towns on Schooldigger.com. On this site she found Fremont was rated 206 out of 246 towns, Sandown North 58 out of 246 Towns, and Kingston 49 out of 246 Towns. She felt this was a large discrepancy and wanted to know what could be done regarding these ratings. She quoted Fremont \$23.12 tax rate which \$15.20 is for school, Sandown \$19.55 tax rate which \$12.54 is school rate and Kingston tax rate \$20.96 which school rate is \$14.40. She is wondering if there is a curriculum problem. Lewis said if she wants to come into the school they can talk further about this. This Schooldigger.com site is not according to DOE standards. She said one town mentioned is a cooperative and that affects your tax rate differently. Nygren asked Lewis if Ellis School made math and reading rating last year and that according to the website they didn't. Lewis said that the educational disabled didn't make it and that Ellis according to the State didn't pass due to the way the State records this information. These figures are not current statistics and are usually a year behind. Kimball recommended Ms. Ryan go to the SAU or the schools to get answers that are updated for her information that she researched.

Question 1-What is the guideline for a child to be "considered" or "assessed as" being in need of special education (written if available)?

Lewis went through the questions on special education that the Budget Committee had requested and she handed out sheets with answers to these questions. In one packet it walks you through regulations and then the procedure they have to go through if a child is identified with a disability. There is training for staff on these rules, regulations and interpretations which are highly regulated. St. Germain asked if these manuals are available at the School office. Lewis said the LEA manual is currently being revamped and needs to be approved by the School Board and that the New Hampshire rules for education are also available on line.

Question 2-How are the children assessed at Fremont and by whom and how often?

Lewis said that the already identified students have to be reidentified every 3 years. They can always evaluate earlier if there is considerable progress and some special education evaluation performance is done every quarter.

The qualified individuals that do the assessing for students are listed on Page 4 Table 1100.1 in a chart format. This shows according to targeted disability what assessments requirements are necessary and who are the qualified examiners to perform these assessments. The vocational assessments have to be paid for outside vendor as there is no one on staff to do these assessments.

Keane asked what is this process and is Lewis called to do the evaluation. Lewis said sometimes the case manager and after that there is a referral to her. Parents can call also to make a referral if there is a concern. The first meeting is disposition of a referral meeting. They sit and discuss the referral and then make a decision whether. Sometime they might just need to be in the response intervention program for 6-10 weeks and see if this works instead of a special education referral. and sometimes this may not be the case in some students.

Question #3-Why does Fremont have such an extraordinary number of kids in special education. They would like current percentages/statistics of the number of children in special education in Fremont, in the State and in the country.

Lewis provided information from Fremont, State but any information from the Country statistics are difficult to find. Lewis went on Department of Education website and she said that they are a year behind in their data. By statewide census she provided State figures approximately 13% over 3 years according to ages and disability. Lewis used numbers from November 2009 and identified 140 students, total population 779 students and put Fremont at 17.9% which is higher than the State. She went back to DOE and pulled surrounding Towns that had 2007-2008 data available. Epping 165, Sandown 293, Oyster, 368, Exeter 421, Raymond 290. Timberlane 868, Hampstead 260, Fremont 119, Chester 154, Litchfield 142, Hudson 525, Portsmouth 348 and Berlin 296.

Lewis said there is no extra money in the identification of disability. It is a difficult decision to make as they could change a person's life and this is not a fun process. Kohlhofer asked what the appeal process. Lewis said they have to hire their own advocate. She hasn't had to go to the appeal process in the 15 years she has been at Ellis. There has been one complaint and it was a paperwork issue.

Question 4-What is the difference between literary coach and reading specialist?

The literary coach is for students that need more intense reading and are there for support Special Education Case Managers on special needs students. There is a case manager in the middle school level on IEP students only and is doing direct teaching and there is one in the elementary school who works with all students not just IEP students.

The reading specialist is in regular education and helps students with their individual needs and helps administration on the school literacy plan and also works as a coach for teachers.

Question 5-There was debate over whether by law we need to provide education for preschoolers "identified". Can we provide them with the law that states we do? According to Kohlhofer he called the State of NH and his understanding is that we do not.

Lewis said we have to provide FAPE at age 2 1/2 and IEP in place by 3 years old. If the child is identified with a disability they have to provide a program. If they are identified to be in a program they would be responsible to place them, provide a speech pathologist, transportation and whatever is necessary for the student to be in their natural setting. Fremont centralized their services. They provide one preschool with a teacher and share therapy staff with the rest of the building. The cost to staff everywhere is exorbitant. This is why Fremont has a preschool program in the best interest of the student as well as the Town. The design is to have an integrated class and she commented that some parents refuse services. The tuitioning students are a perk and are not meant to sustain the program. Lewis said the students are here and we need to provide the service. They have students that progress and having this preschool program is more effective then sending students out.

Nygren said his concern that the cost is exorbitant and asked what is the success through the grade level and asked if there are some loosing their IEPs. He said looking at the specific learning disability figure and stated this is figure is consistent every year at around 40%. Lewis thinks this will probably be found country wide. She feels that the inner city which has a lot of problems due to lack of parenting, drug, etc. can make these figures go up and she feels that Fremont doesn't have these types of issues. She is also seeing a shift in the disabilities that are here now, as years ago Down syndrome was a large percentage and there isn't as much now.

Kimball asked if some children are being taught at too young of an age. Lewis said there are some that fit this and they adapt their teaching to the student.

St. Germain asked about the 2 principals and she referenced the 2005 annual report when she wrote she was relinquishing her special educations duties but she is still in this role. Lewis said this was a nice way of saying we have eliminated the Director position, but can't really eliminate it and she gets to keep it. But there is no budgeted position for Special Education Director. They then added the Out of District Coordinator because this requires a lot out of the building assessment and this was something she had done previously as Special Education Director but she couldn't keep that role. The person that took that role came in at a lower salary. When she started as Special Education Direction there were only approximately 350 students at Ellis and one principal. There is now over 500 students and you can't supervise staff and what needs to be done without an assistant principal. Lewis said if the other principal left they would need to hire two positions a vice principal and a Special Education Director. St. Germain asked if there were any guidelines on the amount of students under one principal. Nygren said there are only guidelines for guidance that is available. Keane said could ask Superintendent Lander to look up the amounts and calculate the figure to see if anything was changed. Nygren then spoke about money that has been moved and again asked to have the function lines that were changed listed and provided to the Budget Committee. Keane will again ask the School Board to provide this list.

With no other questions by the committee for Lewis she was thanked by the Budget Committee for coming in tonight and she left the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Kimball suggested that for next year when they go through the budget they consider eliminating the Saturday session and just have one session for Special Education with Principal Lewis.

A discussion on whether to have the attorney present at January 20th meeting to go through the negotiated teacher's contract. Kimball wanted to have the contract available before the Budget Committee meeting with the attorney. Ida Keane will see if this contract is available prior to the committee's next meeting. The Budget Committee then started to go through function 1200 Special Education.

1200 SPECIAL EDUCATION

A motion to reduce line 5561-30 Tuition NH Public HS from \$315,115.00 to \$303,115.00 was made by Nygren. This was seconded by Kohlhofer. The vote was 4-1. Nay vote by D'eon.

A motion to reduce line 5645-10 Periodicals from \$500.00 to \$400.00 was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by St. Germain. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to reduce line 5610-10 Supplies from \$1800.00 to \$1000.00 was made by St. Germain. This was seconded by Nygren. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to reduce line 5650-10 Computer Software from \$1000.00 to \$500.00 was made by St. Germain. This was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to reduce line 5738-10 Replace Sped Computer Equipment to reduce from \$1500.00 to \$1.00 was made by Nygren. This was supposed to be moved into the Technology Section as stated last year. This was seconded by St. Germain. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to reduce line 5734-10 New Sped Education Equipment from \$1000.00 to \$100.00 was made by Kimball. This was seconded by Kohlhofer. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion for bottom line figure in 1200 Special Education function to \$1,578,837.00 with a reduction of \$15,799 was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by Nygren. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

1270 ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

A motion to reduce line 1270-5121 Tutor Salaries ESL from \$8000.00 to \$1.00 was made by Nygren. This was seconded by St. Germain. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to reduce line 1270-5220 FICA from \$612.00 to \$1.00 was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by Nygren. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to reduce line 1270-5610 Supplies from \$1000.00 to \$1.00 was made by D'Eon. This was seconded by Nygren. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion for bottom line figure of \$3.00 in function 1270 English as a Second Language was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by Nygren. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

1400 OTHER PROGRAM

A motion to recommend function 1400 Other Programs as the school recommendation of \$62,127.00 was made by Nygren. This was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 5-0. The meeting ended at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Nygren
Recording Secretary